

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An absorbent article comprising a chassis and a stretchable fastening member, the chassis extending longitudinally and laterally and comprising a liquid pervious topsheet, a liquid impervious backsheet and an absorbent core disposed therebetween, the stretchable fastening member comprising a fixed portion permanently joined to the chassis, a distal portion provided with a fastening material and a stretchable panel positioned between the fixed portion and the distal portion, the stretchable fastening member being joined to the chassis such that the distal portion is positioned laterally outwardly from the fixed portion in the flat-out configuration of the stretchable fastening member, wherein  
the stretchable panel of the stretchable fastening member comprises a first stretchable zone and a second stretchable zone disposed in the lateral direction,  
the first stretchable zone is capable of providing extensibility upon an initially applied extension force, and  
extensibility of the second stretchable zone is restricted by a restriction means until the restriction means is inactivated, and the restriction means is inactivated upon a further applied extension force such that the second stretchable zone provides an additional extensibility to reduce a stress developed in the stretchable panel.
2. The absorbent article of Claim 1 wherein the restriction means is inactivated upon the applied extension force being not more than 350 g/25mm.
3. The absorbent article of Claim 1 wherein the chassis comprises a side flap being less stretchable than the stretchable panel, and at least a portion of the stretchable panel is superposed on the side flap of the chassis wherein,  
the restriction means comprises a bonding means to detachably join a portion of the stretchable panel to the side flap of the chassis between the fixed portion and the distal portion to provide the first stretchable zone extending between the distal portion and the bonding means and the second stretchable zone extending between the fixed portion and the bonding means.
4. The absorbent article of Claim 3 wherein the bonding means is provided in the configuration where the stretchable panel is unfolded.
5. The absorbent article of Claim 3 wherein the side flap of the chassis is non-stretchable.
6. The absorbent article of Claim 3 wherein the bonding means is detached upon the applied extension force being not more than 350 g/25mm.
7. The absorbent article of Claim 3 wherein the bonding means comprises a waist bonding means and a leg bonding means.

8. The absorbent article of Claim 7 wherein the bonding strength of the waist bonding means is different from the bonding strength of the leg bonding means.